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United Nations Population Award 2007

Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the United Nations Population Award, established by the Assembly in its resolution 36/201 of 17 December 1981. The report covers the year 2007 and was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1982/112 of 26 April 1982.

* A/62/150.
** The compilation of the data required to present the General Assembly with the most current information delayed the submission of the present document.

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Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the United Nations Population Award (2007)

I. Introduction

1. On 17 December 1981, the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/201 entitled "Establishment of the United Nations Population Award". The Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals, to an institution or institutions or to any combination thereof for the most outstanding contribution to increasing awareness of population questions or to finding solutions to them.

2. The laureate is selected by the Committee for the United Nations Population Award, which is composed of representatives of 10 States Members of the United Nations elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of three years.

3. On 5 December 1986, by its decision 41/445, the General Assembly amended article 2, paragraph 1, of the regulations governing the Award (resolution 36/201, annex), so that an individual and an institution could share the Award.

4. On 26 May 1987, by its decision 1987/129, the Economic and Social Council amended the rules of procedure of the Committee for the Population Award accordingly.

5. At its resumed substantive session of 2006, on 15 December 2006, the Council elected the Czech Republic, Lesotho and Malaysia to serve on the Committee for a three-year term expiring on 31 December 2009. Lesotho subsequently resigned in January 2007. At its resumed organizational session for 2007, on 25 April 2007, the Council elected Algeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania to fill outstanding vacancies on the Committee for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2009.

6. During its first regular meeting, on 7 March 2007, the Committee elected Ambassador Anders Lidén (Sweden) as Chairperson for 2007.

II. 2007 United Nations Population Award

7. A total of 29 nominations were received for the 2007 United Nations Population Award from qualified nominators. Of these, 18 were for the individual category and 11 for the institutional category. On 1 May 2007, within the mandate given to it by the General Assembly, and after a thorough review of the nominations, the Committee selected Dr. Hossein Malek Afzali of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Dr. Allan Rosenfield of the United States of America in the individual category and Le Comité National de Population of Algeria and the National Population and Family Development Board of Malaysia in the institutional category.

8. Dr. Hossein Malek Afzali was selected in recognition of his exemplary achievements in the field of reproductive health, family planning and nutrition and for his pivotal role in influencing policymakers and religious leaders in the design and implementation of internationally acclaimed reproductive health programmes in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

9. Dr. Malek Afzali has been involved in many population activities. He was influential in the design and implementation of seven population and health surveys in the Islamic Republic of Iran (from 1985 to 1995). These surveys demonstrated that infant mortality rates were decreasing (from 51 deaths of children under age 1 per 1,000 births in 1985, to 28 per 1,000 in 1995). He has also undertaken research activities in reproductive health and evaluation of family planning and nutrition programmes. Dr. Malek Afzali was instrumental in the design of strategies for improving health delivery procedures, particularly in primary health care, adolescent health, reproductive health and family planning. His expertise was particularly acknowledged in the training of health personnel at all levels and his skills were used to organize the major campaigns on polio vaccination in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan.

10. In the area of advocacy, Dr. Afzali was instrumental in engaging policymakers and religious leaders in the design and implementation of reproductive health programmes in the Islamic Republic of Iran. As a result of these programmes, the total fertility rate of the Islamic Republic of Iran dropped from 6.63 children per woman in 1980-1985 to the current rate of 2.04 in 2005-2010. The Iranian family planning programme is considered a model around the world and Dr. Malek Afzali has been one of the key policymakers in this area. Since 1999, Dr. Afzali has been the Deputy Minister for Research and Technology.

11. Dr. Allan Rosenfield was selected in recognition of his outstanding achievements nationally and internationally in the fields of population, women's reproductive health, obstetrics and gynaecology, human rights and health policy, which have been instrumental in shaping health care around the world, especially for women, and people with HIV.

12. At Columbia University, Dr. Rosenfield designed clinical, community-based and school-based reproductive health programmes in northern Manhattan, and these activities expanded to include the creation of family planning clinics and clinics for young adults, which continue to operate today. Dr. Rosenfield's work, aimed at reducing maternal mortality and the incidence of HIV/AIDS, has been instrumental in shaping health-care and reproductive health policies in many countries around the world, particularly in Africa. With a solid scientific background and varied professional experience, Dr. Rosenfield has participated in high-level advocacy activities, serving on the boards of numerous organizations or as part of advisory groups (for example, the United Nations Millennium Development Project, the World Health Organization, the National Academy of Sciences, the Open Society Institute/Soros Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Kaiser Family Foundation, the Global Health Council, and the International Planned Parenthood Federation). He has been actively involved not only in reproductive health, but also in women's health and human rights issues.

13. Dr. Rosenfield has concentrated on two key issues — maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS. In 1985 he co-authored a seminal paper on maternal mortality entitled "Where is the M in MCH?", which was published in *The Lancet*. This paper subsequently led the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to launch the Averting Maternal Death and Disability (AMDD) programme, the only global programme of its kind which supports 85 projects in 50 countries. Dr. Rosenfield has received many awards and is admired nationally and internationally as a leader and an example to all who work in the field of population and health.

14. Dr. Rosenfield is currently the Director of the Department of Population and Family Health at the Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University.

15. Le Comité National de Population of Algeria was selected in recognition of its outstanding achievements in the field of population education and family planning research and for its advocacy efforts in population policy, which were significant in achieving a moderate rate of population growth in Algeria.

16. The Comité National de Population was created in 1996 and its functions were formalized in 1998. The Comité National is in charge of preparing comprehensive analyses of population issues to facilitate the formulation of population policies and to assist in the incorporation of the population dimension into Algeria's social and economic development plans and programmes. Its activities are carried out through three commissions. The first is in charge of population and development issues; the second in charge of training, information, education, communication and advocacy; and the third in charge of the coordination and follow-up of programmes at the provincial level.

17. In 2001, shortly after the results of the fourth population and housing census were known, the Comité National de Population presented to the Government a report on the population-and-development situation of the country with a series of priorities and strategies covering the entire decade. The report proposed that the Government should give high priority to population policy in order to achieve a moderate rate of population growth and to ensure the use of family planning methods.

18. The National Population and Family Development Board of Malaysia was selected in recognition of its outstanding achievements in the fields of reproductive health, specifically family planning, infertility management, early cancer detection and special programmes for adolescents; socio-demographic research; and family development and welfare, including family education and counselling involving adolescents.

19. At its inception, the National Population and Family Development Board had been mainly concerned with the delivery of contraceptives. As Malaysia accelerated its process of modernization and as the connections between population and development improved, the Board acquired a prominent role in three areas of activity: (a) population, which includes socio-demographic research, monitoring of population trends, and programmes aimed at creating awareness among policymakers and managers; (b) family development, designed to promote family well-being with programmes and actions that include family education and counselling, and specific actions addressing adolescents; and (c) reproductive health, which includes the provision of family planning and a range of services, such as infertility management, early cancer detection screenings, psychosexual counselling, and special programmes for adolescents.

20. The National Population and Family Development Board had been created in 1966, through an act of Parliament, as a statutory body under the Department of the Prime Minister. For almost two decades, Malaysia's national development plans had proposed a reduction of the rate of population growth. In 1984, Malaysia redefined its population policy, and the old campaign based on the slogan "Two is enough" was replaced by measures aimed at decelerating the declining rate of population growth, with the goal of achieving a population of 70 million by the year 2100.

III. Financial matters

21. As at 31 December 2006, the Trust Fund had a total fund balance of $766,736.84. Interest income in 2006 was $32,410. Expenditures in 2007, including the prizes given to the four laureates, totalled $83,849.22.